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THE CHAIN OF LILIES.

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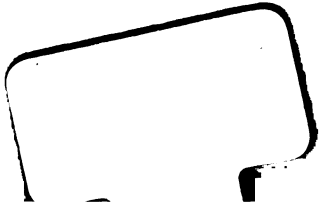

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The Chain of Lilies,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM BRIGHTY RANDS.

LONDON:
KNIGHT AND SON, CLERKENWELL CLOSE.
1857.

280. s. 143.
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[*Note.*—The Reader may not be concerned to know that the Poems in this collection are of very various dates; but it should, perhaps, be stated that the "Pleas" for Italy were written four years ago.]

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following pages will only beg to detain his Reader for a very brief introductory word. He wishes to suggest, in behalf of this little experiment, a critical distinction which is perhaps naturally drawn with peculiar sharpness in the mind of an adventurer for "the Isle of Palms" who has had to cross the *not* "unconquerable bar" before coming in sight of the waters, and to build his little bark of personal culture "under difficulties," which he has no desire to remember, much less to narrate, in detail. The distinction is that which exists between "the vanity of publication," as it is called, and the natural desire of every impulsive writer to find an audience. Poetry, whatever its rank, is, of all mental products, the most

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truly an "utterance:" no one who can help it addresses dead walls or "dearly beloved Roger;" and least of all the Singer, even though he be

"No better a musician than the wren."

Add, that, if one means anything, one must dip oars in the open sea *some* day; and that if the antecedents of the boats which have reached the farther shore, and those which have sunk in mid-sea or faltered back again, were compared, a curious indiscrimination would be found in the *starts:* and there is perhaps nothing else for which the Reader can be fairly held by the button on this occasion,—even though he should haply recognise in this preface a tone or accent not altogether that of a stranger.

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The Chain of Lilies.

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The Chain of Lilies.

I.

[The Poet here showeth how he, having aforetime scorned Love, is at last caught in the toils thereof.]

"LOVE-BROKEN hearts? It seems to me
That hearts will mend no less than limbs,
Your love-bark courts a buffeting sea,
And creaks and strains—but always swims!

How many times may mortals love—
How many times may mortals lose—
And punctual Peace, good-natured dove,
Bring olive-leaves by ones and twos,

And heal, in Heart's despite, its pains?—
Love doth not like its grief to die—
Enough of sweet its sad contains
To ask an immortality!

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Its black is white, its white is black,
From all that I could ever learn;
Stretch'd upon its ambiguous rack,
Ev'n syllogisms do cheat and turn.

I own I like to see my way;
I choose emotions logic-proof;
Love bars his windows to the day,
And lets in water by the roof.

But serve me up one broken heart,
Set duly round with church-yard yew,
And I will yet believe the smart
Which lovers feign is something true."

So, in mock-earnest speech like this,
I slighted Love, pretending Use:
Fool!—all unknowing, I was his,—
He held the purple rein so loose!

He gave me wind-wide charter then,
But soon he rode me fast and sore
Or say, I went to school again,
And there unlearn'd my mocking lore.

I learnt what chances may conspire
To sow the love-seed unawares,
Till, as a subterranean fire,
Slow-clambering volcano-stairs

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At last threats all the peaceful vale
With the red angry front it shows,—
The innocent seed which sprang so pale
Flowers into passion's fiery rose.

I learnt—alas, I cannot tell!
I heard a voice—I saw a face—
I loved, she loved; and it befell—
The strength and beauty of my days!

"Be sure you love me evermore!"
I said with eyes and lips and tongue;
The prayer kept bubbling o'er and o'er,
And one day leapt into this song:—

Thou royal loveliness, my sweet, my own!
My soul mounts trembling when it looks on thee,
And from thy glory's height, as from a throne,
Me, all submiss, thou rul'st, who yet am free,
Counting what men call bondage liberty.
Oh love me dearly!—more than what is known
Of lovers' love, till life be overthrown;
That life within life thou hast given to me,
Deep as the sanctuary of the sea,
Fathomless, tideless, by the winds unblown,
Where sparkles its great emerald soul alone:

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Warm, raise, and bless me—so we twain shall be,
Some day, one fruit upon Life's golden tree
Thou royal loveliness, my sweet, my own

[The Fool.

Now, here is a fellow had five pretty wits,
Hey-nonny no! they all are gone!
I wear the fool's cap, but I know whom it fits,
I jingle my bells, and the world wags on.
Hey-nonny-no!

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II.

[The Lover telleth how, in the pride of his amorous joy, he calleth upon all the world to admire his Love; thinking she hath treasure of beauty and grace sufficient for every one, yea, and to spare. Yet how, upon trial, he maketh discovery that he is fain in his secret heart to keep her all unto himself, to have and to hold, without any manner or degree of participation.]

All day I nursed the bliss new-born
Secretly, in my heart of hearts,
Unless some token, outward worn,
Of joy betray'd me in the marts.

I know my step was strong and light
Beyond what it was wont to be;
But oh, the night, the silent night!
That was the speechful time for me.

Either I rock'd my joy in dreams
With silvery-spoken lullabies,
Or breathed into the wind the themes
I did not fear to tell the skies.

When all the busiless busy slept,
My heart seem'd fain to bid them wake;
The luscious silence she had kept,
Sick with delight, she long'd to break.

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I find this record of the time—
Alas, how lovers' thoughts run wild!
With what ridiculous-sublime
They rear their fabrics fancy-piled!—

When heaven lights up her tapers, keeping wake
Over dead day in pomp funereal furl'd,
I sometimes long to tell the oblivious world
Of my exceeding joy; to cry, "Partake,
Delvers and weepers, senselessly upcurl'd
Upon your beds! I have a wine-cup pearl'
So brimm'd with happiness, ye all may slake
Your heart-thirst too; and foreland rocks, where break
Confluent oceans at their bases hurl'd,
As quickly suck them in as you drink dry
This cup of life." Blind fool! a glance, a touch,
A questioning finger, or a whispering eye,
Aim'd at thy treasure, seems too bold, too much,
And makes thee grasp it with a miser's clutch.

[The Fool.

Ay, grasp, if thou canst, thy five sober wits,
Hey-nonny-no! they all are gone!
I wear the fool's cap, but I know whom it fits,
I jingle my bells, and the world wags on!
Hey-nonny-no!]

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III.

[The Lover speaketh of a day when his Mistress chid him for looking too intently upon her face. His reply.]

Whatever maiden love denies,
In fear lest it should grant too much,
I hold the right of silent eyes
To fill such blanks with mystic touch.

And if my mistress met my glance
But while the clock tick'd one, two, three,
My foolish heart began to dance—
My eyes were fix'd, but could not see.

One day she frown'd a pretty frown,
And bade me turn away my face;
Pouting, I bent my eyelids down,
And trimm'd the flowerets in the vase.

But soon fond eyes reclaim'd their own,
And soon the lids reopen'd wide;
I sang a lay might melt a stone;
My darling smiled and ceased to chide:—

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Chide me, but heed me, guardian angel mine,
And look less bright, less beautiful, less fond,
If that thou canst do aught but love and shine,
And I must turn away my face from thine,
To any thing around, beside, beyond:
Ah me! I am no spy; I gaze, not see;
Meeting thine eyes, my own grow sweetly dim,
Trembles my heart till all my senses swim,
And I turn giddy-blind, almost to thee!
Is that to watch? Oh, doth the morning-star
Watch to grow pale and in the light expire?
Do altar-tops by watching seize the fire?
Love that hath look'd on love hath look'd too far,
And lost all will to watch, or make, or mar.

[*The Fool.*

Lost? This fellow had five pretty wits,
Once on a time, but they all are gone!
I wear the fool's cap, but I know whom it fits,
I jingle my bells, and the world wags on!
Hey-nonny-no!]

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IV.

[The Lover sayeth that suddenly, upon a time, he seemed in his heart to lose all hold of his beloved and she of him, though they were speaking face to face, and he could discern no reason for the same. His trouble, and lamentable complaint thereupon.]

Love is so delicate of sense,
  Cast but athwart his atmosphere
A shadow—and some influence
  Tells the blind boy 'tis time to fear.

Some shadow—what, I cannot say—
  I never knew—know shall I ne'er—
Cross'd my love's path one hateful day;
  I saw it not, I felt it there.

Between the lips which I had kist
  And mine—between my love and me—
There seem'd a curtain of cold mist
  Uprisen from Oblivion's sea.

I touch'd her hand, I saw her face,
  I spoke, she answer'd me again;
And yet our spirits lost their ways,
  And vaguely wander'd into pain.

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Like foemen ghosts in Hades met,
  Speechless upon the dusky strand;
Or statues separately set,
  Which cannot touch, and silent stand;

Or parted jewels in a ring,
  Which shine, but cannot mix their sheen,
We seem'd that day. I may not sing
  Or say the thing that lay between.

The hour went by, another pass'd,
  Yet nothing chased the deathly gloom;
And Geraldine to Surrey glass'd
  In that old wizard's magic room

Not more intangible could be,
  Or more remote than, spite of sense,
That day my darling was to me,
  Till stricken in heart I wander'd thence.

That day, that night, I struggled, hoped,
  And tried to clasp her in my thought;
I chid the darkness where I groped—
  The sullen darkness answer'd naught.

And days and days I sought my dear,
  But could not find the accustom'd track:
One mournful song I sang is here—
  It did not win my darling back:—

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VI.

[The Lover complaineth in his verse that any should mispraise Circumstance; saying, she hath two faces: considering, moreover, that Circumstance led him to his love and her to him, and wove what he calleth a Chain of Lilies for them both.]

What atomies of chance conspire
To bring a life's event about!—
I keep not, I, a thankless lyre,
The ebb and flow of things to flout.

What mortal wit can say how long
The stream of Circumstance had flow'd,
Backward and forward, weak and strong,
Before it bless'd me on my road?

Or what of pain to some it bore,
Leaping what banks of stony strife,
Until it broke upon my shore,
Floating to me my joy of life?

In chance and change our fates are bound,
Our gains and losses, hates and loves;
Blind Mischief! turn the spindle round,
And hear me praise you while it moves:—

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O foolish world, to rail at chance and change!
So have I done, but will not so again,
But with the utmost of my tongue and pen
Will praise dear Circumstance, and bid her range
Where'er she listeth, over strange and new.
She hath two faces, and she turns to men
Sometimes the fair, sometimes the foul—Amen.
Whoever finds her false, I find her true.
Who brought my love to me? Fair Circumstance.
Rail then who pleases, how shall I complain?
By many an artfully inwoven chance,
At last she perfeeted this lilied chain
That binds us children two, who, hand-in-hand
Seek, happy travellers, Love's Golden Land!

[The Fool.

Hath Circumstance hidden thy five pretty wits?
Hey-nonny-no! they all are gone!
I wear the fool's cap, but I know whom it fits,
I jingle my bells, and the world wags on!
Hey-nonny-no!]

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VII.

[The Lover affirms he seeth the Golden Land of Love afar off, unto which he and his beloved are (in his fantasy) bound. He urgeth her forward; saying he heareth sweet music calling them. Biddeth the world farewell, being intent upon his blessed journey. He endeth.]

Now, doubts and questions pass away;
Calmly we journey, hand-in-hand;
Uprisen is Love's perfect day,
To light us to the blessed land.

Across the wilderness we fare,
As faithful hearts must always do;
The lions roar, but cannot tear
The life from friendship that is true.

And floating far, above their din,
Songs from the golden citadel
Come, calling distant pilgrims in,
So cheerily, I must sing as well:—

Sweet, clasp me close! The City shines from far;
Our path lies thither. Lift thy dearest eyes,
And count her turrets painted on the skies!
There all the immemorial lovers are

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Whose sorrows men shall weep while waters roll,
Whose names are household words from pole to pole,
Tender as childhood, sacred as a star.
Do thy feet bleed? Lean on me, I can bear!
The wise world tells us that the way is long,
Teasing into a smile its face of stone;
Far off I hear the blessed ones, in song
Welcoming pilgrims in the distance known:
Our Chain of Lilies, pure and white as snow,
Sits lightly on us. World, we go, we go!

(*Exeunt the Lovers, pacing tenderly to a distant music; and so to the Golden City.*)

[The Fool.

Now, there is a couple had ten pretty wits,
Hey-nonny-no! they all are gone!
What careth the world for these cooing tomtits?—
I jingle my bells, and it trundles on!—
Coo, pretty birds!
I never waste words—
Take, if you will, a fool's benison—
Hey-nonny-no!]

(*Exit Fool, making a great noise with his bells; and so to Vanity Fair.*)

HERE ENDETH

The Chain of Lilies.

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Miscellanies.

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Fighters and Seers.

Up in the mount the fight was long,
The night was dark, the storm was strong:
Pointing with blood-tipp'd swords, a few
Said, "In the clouds are breaks of blue."

Tremblers and doubters kept afar,
Mocking, "How blind the enthusiasts are!"
Amid the fight, the uplifted eye
Saw daylight creeping round the sky.

On-lookers cried, "How dark it grows!
The blood in wasted torrents flows!"
While they the embattled heights who trod
Caught, brightening still, the smile of God.

At last, the blind alone denied
The surging of the rosy tide
Above the hill-tops, and the crown
Of victory waver'd up and down.

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Some cried, "At least 'tis safe to pray,—
Perchance these men may win the day;"
And some, more bold, "Come, let us be
In time to hail the victory!"

When daylight flash'd on helm and blade,
The battle and the storm were stay'd,
And, cheering as the foemen fled,
The crowd rush'd round, to see—the dead.

Up in the broad celestial ways,
Their laggard prayer and bootless praise
Met the last hero-soul—he trod,
That hour, the Paradise of God.

No censer gather'd up the prayer;
Scarce woke the praise an echo there;
Only the angels sadly smiled,
Crowning that soul with laurels piled.

But one, with the recording pen,
Wrote, "They are slow, these sons of men,
To learn that only such as fight,
Far up in the embattled height,
Discern God's distant morning-light."

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Undercurrents.

I CHID my Soul: "Tis strange of thee,
Who never art, but art to be,
Or hast been in the days gone by;
This life thou leadest seems to me
Vain story, or false prophecy.

What real future canst thou claim,
Whose aspiration turns to shame;
Whose deed is from the thought as far
As a poor candle's yellow flame
From the white glory of a star?

And if, for happiness to-day,
I ask the best thing thou canst say,—
Thou mountest up to Memory's tower,
Show'st me a little child at play,
Speak'st of a love which did not flower!"—

My Soul replied: "I still must think
True life is lived upon the brink
Of that which was and is to be:
I know, and, knowing, do not shrink,
Rolls out each way an infinite sea.

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Thou say'st not sooth; for there are times
When what I feel or do sublimes
To more than at the hour I know;
I meet it ripening in the climes
Of the bright land of Long-Ago.

Again: although the deed be wide,
Too oft, of what I prophesied,
I hold the intervening space,
In thought, as what shall be supplied
In some new life of longer days.

God taught me by immortal guile
Hope upon broken hope to pile,
Whose death is but in form and fashion;
And Memory embalms meanwhile
The dear unconsummated passion,

And Childhood from the past redeems.
I know this silent life, in dreams
Of what has been and is to come,
Shall yet be true, when all that seems
So real and loud of life is stricken dead and dumb."

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The Other Side of an Old Idea.

THE great world does not heed my grief ;
It minds not what is dead to me
More than a little yellow leaf,
In autumn, tottering from a tree.

The daylight comes, the daylight goes;
The stars keep step above my head;
The river rolls, the flower still blows—
As if no flower of mine were dead.

The universal life throbs on,
And bates no pulse to see my pain,
Counting the treasure Death has won
Less than a bubble on the main.

Yet, in the broad impassive sky,
And in the hurrying world beneath,
It seems there *should* be sympathy
That what I loved has ceased to breathe.

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Alas, weak heart! take back thy thought:
Steadily go the gliding spheres;
And no new shadow Earth has caught,
Save what is lent her by thy tears;—

Only because, with sleepless eyes,
Love watches over all its realm:
May not a Pilot sympathize
Who keeps his hand upon the helm?

The great original resolve
Embraces all things in its scope;
These cold, stern-seeming laws involve
Our best possessions—dearest hope.

Vast, uncommunicative spheres,
I will not think you mock my pain;
And you, unbroken-rolling years,
Shall give me back the lost again.

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Irresolute Love.

Oh, how shall I for ever bear this burthen at my breast?
Still unconfess'd, unshrived, my heart will break with its unrest!
With reinless tongue, in forest shade, the dove may woo the dove,
But I, irresolute, grow mute and faint before my love!

I thought that I would woo her when the deft embroideress June
Spread carpets bright in wreath-hung halls for dance of elfin shoon;
Would woo her gathering eloquent flowers, whose speech should smooth my way,
But could *I* breathe love to *her*, who seem'd more pure and sweet than they?

One odorous autumnal night, I stole to watch and wait,
With passionate pleadings at my lips, beside her garden-gate;
But the words roll'd back upon my heart, when in the moonshine white,
She walk'd, a thing so spiritual, fairy-like, and bright!

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I sought her late, intent to speak, as home she went her way
From the church where I had been to watch, and she had been to pray;
But my spirit died within me, and behind I trembling trod—
How durst I proffer love to her, who seem'd a saint of God?

Oh, I will seek her when to Want she holds the blessing hand,
Or when she prattles playfully among an infant band;
When the love-fount sparkles up in smiles, or tears wait in her eye,
And her soul is tuned to gentleness that cannot instant die!

Perhaps my timid tongue may speak all eloquent and free,
When she is pitiful to Want, or glad with infant glee,
And I shall bear no longer this hot burthen at my breast,
And my poor heart at a bound shall break, or flutter to its rest!

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The Avatar of Woman.*

THE world is cold-hearted, the world won't be warm'd,
The world is obdurate and won't be reform'd,
It murders, it panders, it steals, and it lies;
The shame of to-day, by to-morrow's outshamed,
Is a thing to be wept over, scarce to be named,—
And the blood on the hearthstone appeals to the skies.

Comes Science the grey-beard, comes Law with the rod,
Comes one with the mien of a Prophet of God,
Comes Philanthropy hauling Statistics along;
But in Science and Sermons, in laws and in speeches,
The love is as latent as poison in peaches,
Or fugitive-faint, like an echo of song.

"Don't tell me you love me! I will not believe!—
There's a greed in your eye, there's a laugh in *your* sleeve;
You're a vain dilettante, and *you* are a knave;
You touch me with mincing and glove-guarded hand;

* The author desires to retain the association of the name of Mrs. Jameson which was originally coupled by him with these verses; and to add, in thought, the names of any of her fellow-labourers in the direction indicated.

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You! preach to Timbuctoo, reform Samarcand,
But not me, till you've learnt of my wounds and my ways."

Alas, poor old World; so repellent, so bad!
Who shall tell us if balm for its wounds may be had?
From the blood-dappled Azof what whisper comes hither?
What victory for peace may be won from the wars?
What bird of sweet omen alights on our shores,
And brings a new hope and a prophecy with her?

Come, dear Better Half of the millions of souls
That live and that love 'twixt the ultimate poles,
We'll give you a trial,—see what you can do!
Go forth in this world full of sorrows and sins,
Bright, tender, untrammelled,—the prize to who wins!
The deaf social adder may listen to you!

Stand forth for a sign of the love that we feel
To the Styx-harden'd nature withdrawing its heel,
And touch—you will find it—its sensitive part;
Till the bad, aching world in your hands and your eyes,
And your voice, finds the peace of the long-forgot skies,
And feels in its bosom once more for its heart!

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A New Year's Confab.

My Pegasus, who knows the stars
In every constellation,
Says, "Do not heed the Calendar's
Misleading information;

Nor think the true New Year begun
This January morning:
The Old has three good months to run—
Those bells but rang her warning.

Then take that time—it will not lag—
To bury all your dead in;
(And don't forget a savoury bag
To put my hungry head in.)

Take stock—'twill save you future time—
Of your abortive castles;
Pick seeds of hope (excuse my rhyme)
And label them in parcels.

Collect yourself; but don't engage
In New Year's operations,
'Till April publishes her page
With floral illustrations."

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How like my Pegasus! Good steed,
You're far too fond of parley,
Yet never pretermit your feed
Of gold and silver barley.

Some truth you speak, some falsehood too,
But don't think you'll be idle;
I'll ride you, Peg, till all is blue,
Hot-spurr'd and slack of bridle.

Put forward your superior leg,
Without procrastination;
I'll tell my friends, who keep a Peg,
Your method of temptation.

And since some dilatoriness
The common Adam owns to,
And fails sometimes, from weather's stress,
In laying his old bones to,—
I'll warn friend Jack, his sweetheart Bess,
And neighbours Brown and Jones, too.

To rest a rheumatism or cough
Is full of instigation;
But—Christian friends—this putting off
Is downright ruination.

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Laughing and Crying.

PRECIOUS is Laughter, that merrily glows
On the stream of our love that in speech outflows,
'Tis of excellent worth, as the brave man knows—
For even by laughter the spirit grows.

Not the Laughter of foolish folk,
Who think the world a humorous stroke,
And life a rather demoniac joke—
The crackling of thorns, with a sequel of smoke.

But the Laughter which brings Truth all the nearer,
Leaving the laughers at ease to hear her,
With hearts the softer and brains the clearer,
And each to other a little dearer!

And Grief, with speech of a mournful close,
When the stream of our love in tears outflows;
'Tis an excellent thing, as the brave man knows—
For even by weeping the spirit grows.

Not the Grief who is sister to Despair,
Who twines the poison-flowers in her hair,
And leaves a storm-track blasted and bare;
But she who, though pale, is tender and fair—

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Whose track on the soul, when her work is done,
To anointed eyes, is just such an one
As shows like the thread by the gossamer spun,
Dew-bedropt, in a morning sun.

A Home-Chant:

AUGURIES.

TEN thousand tongues bespeak the soul,
In nature and in life;
Some talk to passion of control,
And patience amid strife:
Some say, Be kind; some say, Be strong;
Some, Keep a watchful eye;
Some, Time is short and Art is long;
But none, Lie down to die!

There's no such whisper in the air
From sky, or field, or river:
You never heard it anywhere,
If you're an honest liver;
The Fiend may have such things to say—
He knows the reason why—
And people who *will* pass his way
Get beckon'd off to die.

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But as for you and me, my dear,
We go another road;
When trouble comes we will not fear—
A jewel's in the toad!
Come, help me to pick up our hopes
And bear them well on high;
Smelfungus gropes, Mundungus mopes—
We give *them* leave to die.

I see some fairies in the fire,
At kindly incantation;
I hear a bird upon a brier,
Which sings of consolation;
I see a castle in the air,
A rainbow the black sky in—
We won't let Mrs. Grundy stare
At you and me a-dying!

Another:

RIDDLES.

THEY ask me the reason I love you so well,
Sweet Wife of my choice; but, oh, how can I tell?
If I say 'tis your eye, or your cheek, or your hair,
Some charm unremember'd protests 'tis not fair:

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If I vow 'tis your soul, lo, the babe at your breast
Seems to say—"With soul only, you were but half blest."
So what can I answer, when cause should be shown?
I love you because you're yourself and my own!

Then they ask us the reason we tease the dear child
With kisses on kisses incessantly piled:
Well, his coo is sweet music, his locks a pale gold,
And his eyes full of light as they ever can hold;
Yet as we look on him, the fondness that speaks,
In the throb of our hearts, or the tear on our cheeks,
Will not render a reason so easily shown—
We love him because he's himself and our own!

The stars every night, and the flowers in their season,
Still sparkle and bloom without giving a reason;
And Joy, bright-plumed angel, who smiles as she sings,
And Sorrow, grave-brow'd, with the dusky-grey wings,
When they visit our roof, if they that find we love,
Will leave us the blessings they bear from above,
And ask us no questions—assured that the *why*
Of the love that shall light up our path till we die
Stands writ in a Book that's kept up in the sky!

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A Plea for Italy.

I.

NURSLING of all plenteousnesses,
Peace-lapp'd, soothed by love's caresses,
Wreathing with home-flowers thy tresses,
Free in mind, and heart, and hand—
Spare a thought, a pulse's beating,
For the passionate wild entreating
Bitterest echoes are repeating,
Daily, from Italia's strand!

II.

It shall wring thy heart, her story,—
Dante's, Tasso's nation,
Grown in patriot honours hoary,
Crown'd with Poesy, girt with Glory,
On Despotism's altar gory,
Offer'd, an oblation!
Muse thou o'er the maddening page
That reveals her vassalage;
Noble men, in plight of slaves,
Tortured to ignoble graves;—

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Woman, form'd for love and honour,
With the scourge-mark red upon her—
Ah, thine eyes with tears o'erflow,
As the visions come and go,
Multitudinous in woe!
Lifting, then, thy eyes in wonder,
Call'st thou not for vengeful thunder?

III.

Not for *thee*, the coming wrath
Will deviate from its heaven-traced path;
Not for thee, will sooner break,
Through the dark, one orient streak,
To foreshow the coming morning;
Yet hope is rife, and loud is warning,
And the wrath comes fast and fast,
And the day *shall* break at last!

IV.

Italy shall live again,
In the sight of God and men!
From the awaken'd nations, then,
Back unto her shall be roll'd,
In a tide of gratitude,
All their mighty debt of good
To her, in ages dark and rude,
When Queen of Arts and Seas she stood,
Oh [illegible] her, a thousandfold!

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V.

Thou, to blessed freedom born,
Pity her millions, so forlorn,
That live to agonize and mourn!
By all human love and ruth—
By thy spotless mother's breast—
By all holiness and truth,
Pity the bleeding land's unrest!

I

Nor this alone—if brave and true,
There is work for thee to do;
To the trampled, the betray'd,
Real and great is humblest aid!
Dwell not thou in land of dreams—
Trace not Party's round of schemes—
Haunt not dull Convention's halls;
Shun her trim restricting walls;
Wear not thou her icy chain
Round thy heart or round thy brain;
Seek not Ease's velvet chair—
Freedom lovers sit not there;
Souls are kept from putrefaction
By warm tides of love and action!
Noble things thy hands may do,
If thy heart be brave and true.

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Italy and England.

I HAD been reading old Boccaccio,
And, musing by the fire-light's fitful glow,
  Sat watching the quaint shadows rise and fall—
  The map that lay upon my chamber wall,
Show'd suddenly a weird and wondrous change:
There came a hand, writing in letters strange,

Which yet methought I read, by magic hap;
The finger traced each nation on the map,
  Obliterating river, mountain, city,
  And, now it seem'd in wrath, and now in pity,
Wrote over each, in lieu, some meaning word,
Which also utter'd by a voice I heard.

Instead of England, writ in letters bold,
The words I read were only—*Gold, Gold, Gold!*
  But then across the Atlantic stretch'd a band,
  Whereon was written—*Hope*,—that to a land
Far west, united her, as groom to bride—
In that land's place was written, *Pride, Pride, Pride!*

And with the voice which spoke, a sound I knew
For that of rattling chains, which fainter grew,
  As firmer, brighter, show'd that band of union,
  Brilliant with gleams of bettering communion.

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Poor Africa seem'd a dark blotted mass,
One only word was to be traced—*Alas!*

So swiftly over Portugal and Spain
The fingers pass'd as with a twitch of pain,
  Scarce could I tell what the gaunt cyphers meant,
  Save that *Priestcraft* and *Ignorance* were blent.
O'er France, a fetid mist seem'd to arise,—
The words I read were—*Murders, Treacheries, Lies!*

I saw not Austria, and in her stead
Came gleams of jagged lightning, very red—
  And Turkey was a slowly vanishing blot.
  But Hungary and Poland,—which were not
When last I look'd,—by the weird fingers smitten,
Now show'd in light, and *Live again!* was written.

Anon, with solemn pause the fingers stood—
I look'd for Italy in trembling mood—
  But when they touch'd her shore, I read no word
  At first,—the map with blood was so much blurr'd,
And the voice spoke, appealingly, her name,
Half-drown'd in cries of suffering mix'd with shame,

Echoes of scourgings, anguish'd victory-cries,
As from a martyr triumphing who dies,
  While murder'd men's wives and young orphan'd
    children,
  Made up a chorus piteously bewild'ring:

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And England's name I heard, in bitterest moans,
And cries for help that might have moved cold stones!

Heart could endure no longer—the spell broke,
And with fast-dripping eyes, I wildly woke!
Are there not *real* cries that might rouse a sleeper?
"I know not: am I then my brother's keeper?"
"Non-intervention" saith! O dark eclipse,
Were England's true soul quench'd, Cain's words upon her lips!

Baby-Talk.

WALK the beach once more with me,
Blue-eyed Maiden:
Of things which have been and may be
Thou shalt prattle winsomely,
Charming grief away from me,
Me, sorrow-laden.

Ah, a sail is on the sea,
Fair-hair'd Maiden;
Ah, a sail waits on the sea,
Now the wind is blowing free,—
Waits to bear thee far from me,
Me, sorrow-laden.

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Six rowers stout and strong,
Blue-eyed Maiden,—
Six rowers stout and strong,
They will bear thee swift along,
Singing to me a farewell song,
Me, sorrow-laden.

Say good bye; I kiss thy brow,
White-brow'd Maiden:
Gaily the vessel dips her prow;
Leave me to my sorrow now;
Tears are not for such as thou,
Sweetest flower of Aidenn!

"How shall I bid thee adieu,
So sorrow-laden?"
Oh, her heart is kind and true!
Let us take the boat, we two,
And sail away into the blue
Sky-seeming Aidenn!

How can she ever love me so,
Me, sorrow-laden?
She is fair and kind, I know,
Bright as sunshine, pure as snow:
Kiss me thrice, and let us go,
Blue-eyed Maiden!

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Love in July.

"I LOVE my Love, and my Love loves me,"
And we mingle our loves and our lives together;
My love is as wide and as deep as the sea,
And as chatty and fresh as the leaves on the tree,
And hers is as sweet and as warm as the weather.

I love my Love, and my Love loves me,
And we mingle our eyes and our hands together;
And their language is, "Cheerily! thus will it be,
Right down to the very last inch of our tether."

I love my Love, and my Love loves me,
And oh, when we mingle our lips together,
Time spreads his old wings out, and, low on his knee,
Says, "Cupid, you're welcome to every feather!"

I love my Love, and my Love loves me,
Like the Boy and his Psyche embracing together,
Or two little dickybirds up in a tree;
But the tittlebats down in the depths of the sea
Have the best of the love in this very hot weather.

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Just Dead.

DRAW the curtains close;
  Whisper a brief, brief prayer,
For him, so pale and dumb in his woes;
Lay on her breast a white, white rose,
  And leave our darling there;
With the peachy bloom that lay on her cheek
Faded away to a single streak,
And a chill on her bosom that throbs no more
With the beautiful life that hath gone before.

O breathing white, white rose!
  O breathless whiter form!
The morning comes, and the evening goes,
  With change of calm and storm;
But ye, sweet flowers, shall fade together,
Where changeless night makes fairer weather
Than waits on the hearts which say in their pain,
"The flower that was fairest shall bloom again!"

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A Hope in Heaven.

God sent me, from his fields of light,
A little Lily, saintly-white.

I kiss'd it; from its silver tips
A sweetness trembled o'er my lips.

I softly held it to my breast,
My heart grew warmer where it prest.

I proudly held it in my hand,
It lighted me across the land.

This lily, loved and cherish'd so,
Alas, the day! was mark'd to go.

A wind came from the hungry sea,
And bore my Lily dear from me.

I saw it float, away, away—
O sea, so cruel, and cold, and grey!

I long'd to follow, if I might,
My Lily into the ocean-night.

I could have gone, but I was stay'd
By a celestial Voice, which said,—

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"Patience! your flower has gone before,
To bloom upon the farther shore;

And all the love that lily-bark
Has borne with her into the dark

Is but a hostage claim'd of yours,
By that blest land where all endures.

Holding your hope, these distant skies
Shall seem less foreign to your eyes.

And when your hour shall come—it will,—
See! that cold ocean hungereth still—

You will not fear to go the way
By which your Lily sought the day

In which she marks each golden hour
By putting forth a sweeter flower."—

Dead darling!—I count time by tears—
Teach me, O Lord, to know my years!

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Across the Brook.

THE white mists were rising, the sun had gone down,
Ere we thought of the path that led into the town,
Hand-in-hand turning back, with a pause and a sigh,
As the harvest-moon rose, red and round, in the sky.
We had rambled together, like children at play,
Through meadow and woodland, the sweet autumn day;
From the mill to the stile, and from hedgerow to tree,
I had chased her, and chased her, and, push'd for a plea,
Had kiss'd her whenever I caught her, you see!

Homeward loitering, came o'er us a strangeness of bliss,
Like a joy that was dreaming of something amiss;
Speaking lowly, unheeding the road that we took,
We wander'd, and came to a turbulent brook.
At an impulse, I leapt it, then smilingly stood,
And beckon'd her over the minnikin flood;

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But my darling stay'd, pausing, and stretching her hand—
"Now help me, true knight, to your side, as you stand!"

I felt a warm flush to my temples uprise,
With a quick-beating heart, I look'd into her eyes—
"If I help you across what has sunder'd us now,
"Will you *stay* at my side?"—Then of rite and of vow
I spoke, as the moonlight fell full on her brow.
One moment of silence—she stretch'd out her hand,
And sunk on my breast, as I brought her to land,
And kiss'd her, and clasp'd her, that fondest of girls,
With a hand that lay trembling deep down in her curls!
The old church stood solemn and grey on the hill,
As we pass'd it, and all things were soothingly still,
And 'twas there in the moonlight, whatever they say,
That our souls became one,—though our wedding's to-day.

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The Story of Melusina.*

"I respect the secret of a lady. . . . ."
"I am glad to hear that," said Juno.
B. DISRAELI: *Ixion in Heaven.*

I.

MELUSINA the fair was a nice little girl,
Her eyes were like stars, forehead pure as a pearl,
Crown'd with nice auburn hair in the nicest of curl;
And Sir Raymond he wooed her, that nice little girl.

II.

"Now promise me true, loving lord of my soul,
That you'll leave me my Saturdays free from control,
From daybreak till midnight, unbroken and whole;
Don't molest me on Saturdays, lord of my soul!"

III.

Sir Raymond he kiss'd her, the pledge was soon said;
Sir Raymond he kiss'd her, and soon they were wed:
Fairer maid never blush'd with the bridal-day red,
Braver knight never knelt when the vow should be said.

* Curiosities of Literature, First Series, Article "Romances."

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IV.

Loving hours, loving days, loving months, roll'd away,
And the knight never broke on the pledge-guarded day;
"She hies to the loneliest chamber to pray,
Or to question her soul, on the pledge-guarded day."

V.

Comes the Tempter at last—"Now, bethink thee, Sir Knight,
Of thy bed and thine honour! Consider aright—
How, the seventh day, she quits thee, and flies from the light:
'Tis to sin and to shame, idly credulous knight!"

VI.

Now knight, to what pitiful thing hast thou grown!—
Through cold, mildew'd chamber, and corridor lone,
On the day which his pledge had confirm'd for her own,
He seeks her, mistrustful and doubt-weary grown.

VII.

To the donjon! What sees he? A pool flowing wide,
And a mournful mermaiden—his darling, his bride,
Who had leant on his bosom, had lain at his side,
Is a splashing mermaiden! 'Twere better he d[ie]

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VIII.

Than have sought out this horror, this penance have known!—
Poor fairy! for some long-past sin to atone,
She was changed once a week to a mermaiden lone.
Sir Knight, you must die now the secret you've known!

IX.

There's a horrible cry, there's an agonized scream,
And pool and mermaiden are gone like a dream,
And Sir Raymond sinks down, as might mortal beseem,
Heart-frozen at sound of that agonized scream!

L'ENVOI.

British husband! you smile, but pray deign to be taught too—
Never go for to pry into things you don't ought to;
Ten chances to one you don't find what you look'd for,
But—you can't tell what awkward discoveries you're book'd for.

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Snow-Fall.

It comes again, the eternal snow—
So soft, so still, so white, I know
It came a thousand years ago.

Speak thou, my ruddy-bosom'd bird,
Winter's familiar, hast thou heard
Against the snow a whisper'd word?

A listener thou at many a pane,
Whom didst thou ever hear complain
The eternal snow had come again?

"The Lady Alice, with drooping curl,
Playfully counting ruby and pearl,
Her latest keepsake from the Earl;

And the widow, poising her marriage-ring,
In wonder how much bread it might bring
For her sick little boy, that lay shivering;—

I tapp'd at the windows of both to-day,
And both look'd out in the morning gray,
And neither frown'd on the snow as it lav:

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But peaceful fancies seem'd to glide
Into the brain of widow and bride,
As they watch'd the whiteness falling wide."

Bird, it is sooth! We chide the rain
And wind, when they batter the flinching pane,
And we pity the traveller by land or main;

And we shiver almost for the sake of the dead—
But not when the coldest sky has shed
Its fair white drapery for their bed.

Thou hast silently blanch'd the grave, cold snow,
Where we laid our pretty one, not long ago,
And we do not shudder to think it is so;

Her brother is clapping his hands for glee,
And wishes the dead were here to see,
Eternal snow, and to welcome thee!

Rough words for the rain, and the wind from the hill,
Though it soften the furrow, turn the mill,
But hail to the snow with a hearty good will!

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To a Chrysanthemum.

SHIVERING, yellow
  Chrysanthemum!
Poor little fellow,
  I know you are dumb;
Else you should tell me
  What you do here,
Why you befell me
  At this time of year.

If you could speak,
  No doubt you would say—
"When the rose on the cheek
  Of the year dies away,
I feel it a duty
  To do what I can
With my modest beauty,
  You curious man."

I know it, I know it,
  Your motive is kind!
And let me, humble poet,
  Declare that I find,

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In spite of the vapours
  Of man-hating wights,
Who burn sickly tapers
  And grumble o' nights,

That, in life's dullest hours,
  Among friends there are some
Like you among flowers,
  My Chrysanthemum!
Poor little fellow,
  You know when to come,
Good-natured, yellow
  Chrysanthemum!

For Music.

"VANITY all!" said Uncontent,
Knitting his brow, as he gloomily went;
"Folly and wickedness, change and pain—
The world's a riddle, and life is vain!"—
  Then voices came to him, answering plain:

False! in the sky sang the luminous Spheres,
Shining calmly on for thousands of years;
False! said the Sea with a conqueror's pride,
  he roll'd up the shore the returning tide.

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False! said the golden Furze on the heath,—
False! said the tapering Fern beneath,—
False! rang the Blue-bells, in musical chime,
Borne on the breath of the trodden thyme.

False! said the Sun, as his setting beam
Slanted over a capital, built by a stream,
Where dwelt fair, kind women, and brave, good men,
Who knew that he sank but to rise again.

False! said Childhood gambolling nigh—
False! said Youth, with dilated eye—
False! said Love, with defiant breath—
False! said Faith, smiling sweetly at Death!

"Vanity all! my word was true!"
Said Uncontent, by the grave-loving yew;
False! cried the Flowers on the churchyard sod,—
Breathing of life and hope from God,
In the shadow of Death where the doubter trod.

Song.

TAKE me away from this wearisome world,
Where the banner of beauty is torn or is furl'd;
Take me away,
Through the clouds far away,
For oh, 'tis a wearisome world, well-a-day!

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Build me a palace, with rainbow spars—
Panels that glitter with purple stars—
A radiant hall,
A lonely hall,
Where my soul and I may keep festival.

But first let me say a kind farewell
To the friend of my soul, whom my soul loved well:
Lonely will roll,
Drearily roll,
Thy days when thou losest me, friend of my soul!

Let me look, if I dare, on the maid I love best,
With the large brown curls lying warm on her breast:
Ah! she comes this way,
Comes tripping this way—
The world's not so bad as it was yesterday.

Oak is better than rainbow spars—
Lamps are brighter than purple stars—
Let me empty a bowl,
A full, merry bowl,
And talk down the hours with the friend of my soul.

And when fireside shadows their dance begin,
And the rosy curtains are drawn within,
There's a word I would say,
There's one word I *must* say
To the girl I love dearest, heigh-ho, well-a-day!

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Song.

As the stars in the sky, as the sand on the shore,
Or the leaves that lie red on the damp forest-floor,
Counted once, counted twice, and again counted o'er,
  Are the thoughts that I think every hour for my girl:
And deep as the vault where the stars melt away,
Or the sea, from the coral-caves up to the spray,
Measured once, measured twice, measured oft as you may,
  Is the love that I bear to her tiniest curl:

And my thoughts, and my love, shall last on till the wave
Sends up never a tide from the five-fathom cave,
And the leaves fall no more on the dying year's grave,
  And the pale staggering stars disappear in a whirl.

Gentle Sorrow.

Oh leave me, friend! my grief is dear!
  Leave me awhile to gentle sorrow!
From pride or hate this silent tear
  No taint of bitterness doth borrow.

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There is a charm in kindly pain;
The very heart that aches to bear it
Finds pensive pleasure in the chain,
And loves, at last, to feel and wear it.

Love, meek, though faithful, can impart
A sweet to every kindred feeling;
Love-born, the fond, bereaved one's smart,
Enfolds the infant germ of healing.

To sickness and to grief belong
A magic, blest and soul-refining,
That charms the heart, and holds it long,
By silken spells around it twining.

By pain, or soft regrets chastised,
The spirit's vision'd sense grows clearer;
And, sensual gauds and aims despised,
The spirit-world seems strangely nearer.

Etherialized and rapt, we gaze
From pinnacles of thought, half dizzy,
On earth; and, through a mystic haze,
Her stirring crowd seem idly busy.

If night bring rest, we dreaming sleep—
From sights celestial waking early;
And, through our tears, if then we weep,
Heaven's fading gates look bright and pearly.

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We seem to live a double life,
  Like one in wakeful slumber walking;
Vacant, we join earth's daily strife,
  The heart, meanwhile, with angels talking.

Above, the stream that all behold,
  Acts, words, a restless mingled torrent;
Below, o'er sands of priceless gold,
  Flows Meditation's under-current,

Blessedly, like this silent tear—
  Oh leave me, friend, to gentle sorrow—
Is that an angel-voice I hear?—
  Oh, friend, come to me on the morrow!

Light through the Trees.

How fair it seems, the sunshine blest,
  On hill-top and on spire,
Or spreading, waveless, o'er the west,
  A sea of crimson fire:
Or when through wintry morning's shroud,
  It breaks with roseate tinge,
Or round fantastic folds of cloud
  Sets gold and silver fringe!

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The sunshine is a glorious thing,
And very beautiful,
At noon-tide, or at day's young spring,
Or eve, aslant and cool;
But never dearer than when shed,
In woodland, by degrees,
Through leafy lattice overhead,—
The sunshine through the trees!

Through the laced boughs, a soften'd day
Peeps with uncertain glance,
While, on the sward beneath, at play,
The faint leaf-shadows dance:
And yet the tiniest floweret there,
The eye, undazzled, sees,—
So clear, though mild, that radiance fair,
The sunshine through the trees.

Truth is a great and gorgeous sun,
And he may pour his light,
Unshaded, on the favour'd one
That challengeth the sight;
But often let him mildly shine,
Soften'd and by degrees,
And, on this timid heart of mine,
Shed radiance through the trees!

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Sweet thoughts and fancies intertwined
  Are shadowing foliage green;
And Truth's blest sunshine cannot blind
  If shed the leaves between:—
On all, not ev'n in Paradise,
  Shineth unveil'd that sun,—
Only on His unfaltering eyes,
  The All-beholding One.

O ye, who bold in heated blood,
  Or ardent in your youth,
For ever deem it right and good
  To speak unsoften'd Truth,—
Who think kind words are labour vain,—
  Who wound, when ye would mend,—
Cruel, when boasting to be plain,—
  And severing friend from friend;

A thousand shadows intervene,
  Between Truth's sun and you,
And, walking in prismatic sheen,
  Ye deem it but your due:
Oh, thankless, shameless as ye are,—
  Cease ways unkind as these,
Whilst Truth, your shrinking eyes to spare,
  Sheds sunshine through the trees!

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Sonnet.

(FROM GOETHE.)

At the last day, when doom loud-trumpetèd
The end of the earth and all it holds is saying,
Each shall account, a high behest obeying,
For every idle word that he hath said!
Ah, how will't fare with words unnumberèd,
In which, through all thy silly, coy delaying,
I still have sought thy love with endless praying,
When the loud summoning blast bursts round thy head?
Therefore, beloved one, let thy conscience hear!
Bethink thee how thou hold'st me in suspense;
Let not, for worlds, the worst that may befall;
For if my vows, where love o'ermaster'd sense,
Must be recounted by me, one and all,
Sure the last day will stretch into a year!

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Willkommen und Abschied.*

(FROM GOETHE.)

I.

My heart beat quick—To horse, away!
Swifter than thought, and onward still!
Soon on the plain the evening lay,
And soon the night hung on the hill;
And through the mist the oak that loom'd
A storied giant seem'd to rise,
When darkness through the thicket gloom'd
Drearily with a hundred eyes.

II.

Sad, from behind a piled-up cloud,
The moon look'd forth upon the night;
Strange harp-like moanings, deep, not loud,
The winds were uttering in their flight,
And formless horrors throng'd my road—
Yet, ah! my soul was glad, was free;
My blood was burning as it flow'd—
My heart was warm with thoughts of thee!

* Meeting and Parting.

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III.

I saw thee, and a tender joy
  Stream'd from thy gentle glance to mine;
Against thy side my heart beat high,
  And every breath I drew was thine:
A brightness, fresh as spring-tide flowers,
  About thy dearest face there grew,
Where beam'd thy love for me,—kind powers!—
  My hope, but all beyond my due.

IV.

Too soon the sun stood in the sky,
  When we must part—my heart was wrung—
Then in thy kisses, oh what joy,
  Then on thine eyes what sadness hung!
I went—thy glances follow'd me,
  Tearfully eager, on my road—
But oh, what bliss beloved to be!
  To love thee, what a rapture,—God!

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Trost in Thränen.*

(FROM GOETHE.)

Oh, how is this that thou art sad,
When all is gay beside?
Ah, thou hast wept, for in thine eyes
The tears are scarcely dried.

"In loneliness if I have wept,
My griefs were mine alone,
And for each tear-drop sweetly shed
My heart hath lighter grown."

But hark! they call, thy smiling friends,
They woo thee to their side—
Thou dear forlorn, whate'er thy loss,
To us thy loss confide!

"Oh, rave not, haste not—'tis not thus
My sorrow ye may share:
Ah me, it is for nothing lost
The sacred woe I bear."

Thou hast not lost? Then speed thee, rise,
And stir thy youthful blood!
Thy years are few, thy soul is strong,
To stem life's stormy flood.

* Comfort in Tears.

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"No strength may win the thing I seek,
It looks on me from far,
With as bright an eye, from a home as high,
As o'er me yonder star!"

Now, who goes longing for the stars,
Although their light be dear,
And rapt our glances at the sky,
When the lustrous night is clear?

"And I, too, can look rapt on heaven,
Through many a blessed day;
So let me choose the night for tears,
And weep my woe away!"

Cousin Zenobia.

COUSIN ZENOBIA braids her tresses
Silken-bright from an ample brow;
Has wicked eyes full of womanly guesses
Where truth may be found, and when, and how.

She moves in a music, sits in a splendour—
They say she is proud as Lucifer:
Foolish!—the heave of her breast is tender,
And the little children go to her.

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She plays, she broiders, she sings, she sketches,
Or teases, or talks to the old macaw—
Ah! does she think of luckless wretches
Making their bricks of bliss without straw?

A riddle she is of breathing glory;
Find me the answer, sage, I pray!
Sequel is there to her daily story?
What is the good of Zenobia?

Stay, I bethink me! No divining!
I trust in her beauty, and do not care;
There must be a use to so much shining—
Cousin Zenobia, braid your hair!

Live like a queen, to-day, to-morrow!
Draw happy breath as long as you may!
Where is the life-stream which willows of sorrow
Do not shadow at last on its way?

Over rough beds of sad surprises,
Our Zenobia's yet may flow;
And, unless its current fertilizes,
How should the borders so greenly show?

Pretty Zenobia! none shall whisper
Task-work to one so bright and fair,
Till your poet shall think to pluck down Hesper.
For lanthorn-light to an evening chare.

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He told the envious gods that day
What it was in his heart to say;
They thought it too divine by half,
And, with their most ill-natured laugh,
Commanded Pain and Doubt to come,
And strike the eloquent creature dumb;—
From morning until night again
Doubt did it, little help'd by Pain.

The young Immortals in the bowers
Pitied him through those penal hours,
And whisper'd in his open ear
A thousand things more sweet and dear
Than any he had meant to say;
Adding, "Use these another day,
But, lest we all be crost and vext,
Speak first, and tell those fellows next."

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Crumbs of Joy.

STILL for us the Kind One spreads a table,
Crown'd with flowers, and served by loves and graces,
Yet, where'er we turn, we are not able
To escape those pale and yearning faces.

Faces that look forth with supplication
Into ours, that we would share their sadness,
Or with hope to catch some scintillation
Of our own illuminating gladness.

Ah, they speak, pale faces!—meekly calling,
"Yours the festal purple, ours the sable;
Let us share the crumbs of bliss down-falling,
Happy souls, from your abundant table!"

Take we, then, the plenty and the beauty
With a hand no dull-eyed caution closes;
Serving, with a frank and cheerful duty
Him who crowns the bounty with the roses!

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Doublet and Hose.*

O IT was a damsel of lofty degree
Fared forth in disguise through the forest-countrie;
A kinsman ungentle had banish'd the maid,
And in doublet and hose, a fair pilgrim, she stray'd.

Yet the light of true love in her bosom she bore,
And bless'd it, like thousands of pilgrims before;
For let the blind Furies do all that they may,
The heart that loves truly is blessed for aye!

So this delicate maiden, of lofty degree,
Was happy and glad in the greenwood to be,
And, strong in young hopefulness, wandering goes,
Though footsore and faint, in her doublet and hose.

She reck'd not the rough rede of forester churl,
For sweet were the notes of the mavis and merle;
And some trace of the loved one appear'd to her eye,
In all that she look'd on, beneath the blue sky.

* Readers not at home with "Shakspere and the musical glasses" are referred to *As You Like It* for the theme upon which this trifle is a variation.

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One noontide, she came, by kind wood-spirits led,
This maid, by her kinsman unkind banishèd,
To rest on a bank sweetly shaded; when, lo!
A footstep approaches, whiles resting her so.

Uplifting her blue eyes, what then doth she see,
This wandering maiden, of gentle degree?
'Twas Orlando, her love! In her presence he stood,
A rover, like her, in the merry greenwood.

Upstarts she, a-sudden, all glowing her face,
While her love and her shame, each to other, gave chase,
And, "Alas the day!" sighs she, in maidenly throes,
"What, what shall I do, with my doublet and hose?"

Sooth it were to declare what came after, so sweet,
And how "mountains will move, that true lovers may meet,"—
How this fair, by her kinsman unkind banishèd,
Went in doublet and hose, till the hour she was wed.

But why should we sing what so oft hath been told?
'Twere better to seek what the tale may enfold,
If this maid in disguise, going softly along,
May stand for Kind Heart, freshly-bleeding wrong.

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Kind Heart, that is gentle and womanly fond,
Pass a few schooling years, a drear lesson hath conn'd
And to shield her from pain, as a pilgrim she goes,
Puts on manliest sternness for doublet and hose.

Comes a Heart of her kith and her kindred anon,
('Twas the very same star on their birthday that shone,)
A poor, stricken deer, like herself banished,
From the dull, cruel crowd either driven or fled

Then from each unto each goes a questioning thrill,
That sets the pulse throbbing, in spite of the will;
Next, through glance, and through movement, through gesture and tone,
Fond spirit to spirit makes passionate moan.

O 'tis then that Kind Heart, with a tearful surprise,
Feels embarrass'd and guilty in any disguise;
And, ere to embrace her sweet sister she goes,
'Tis "What shall I do with my doublet and hose?"

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The Waiting Angel.

THE Painter who should drop his brush,
Because he could not seize the blush
Of heaven, when birds do dreamily stir,
And the warm sun first touches her,
Would not be worthy of his name—
He cannot copy the morning-flame,
But with his best of artist-wit
Lovingly strives to render it,—
And Heaven, in our ideal sense,
For him and us makes recompense.

The Poet who should break his lyre
Because he could not make the wire
Echo the music of the spheres
In perfect tones to mortal ears,
Translate all utterance of the gods
In the rude phrase of mortal clods,
Fling from its delicate frame of gold
The thunder, awful as it roll'd,—
No bard were he! He sings his best—
Celestial law provides the rest.

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The man who will not gird his loins
For that which Truth or Love enjoins,
Because he knows his work, when wrought,
Will fall below his hope and thought,
Is no true workman. Let him do
The thing his conscience points him to;
And he shall find the seed he cast
Spring up when many days are past,
Whilst every honest deed will bring
A training for that nobler thing
For which Archangel Duty waits,
Keeping Occasion's golden gates
For such as watchfully pursue
Her long, laborious avenue;—
Many She calls, but chooseth few,
To crown at last when crowns are due.

Christmas Day.

To live for love, to pardon wrong,
To think that God is kind and just,
These things to every day belong,
Like honest work and earnest trust:
We would not meet this festival
With any straining of the heart—

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May He who sees and succours all
  Make each one faithful in his part
And let pretence be put away,
This simple, cheerful Christmas Day.

But if there be a fault to own,
  Or if an injury to forget,
Then let us pardon or atone,
  And ease the life-string of its fret
Now, when the old symbolic time
  Such frank occasion seems to give,
In echoes of the immortal chime,
  Peace and good-will to all that live!
Let sins and shames be put away,
This humble, hearty Christmas Day.

And if there be a heart that breaks,
  Or bends too low beneath its cross,
May thoughts of Heaven, which gives and takes
  Alike in love, make up its loss!
Oh, friend, who mourn'st the vacant chair!
  Oh, mother, with the babeless breast!
Your book of life is writ more fair
  Above, where all shall be redrest;
Come, bear your grief in gentler way,
This sacred, hopeful Christmas Day!

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New Year's Eve.

THE snow hangs heavily in air;
Upon the bough no leaf remains;
The mist lies lowering everywhere,
And opaline upon the panes.

A dusky red is in the sky;
A twilight calm is falling down;
More dreamily come floating by
The murmurs of the distant town.

The year is dying! In my breast,
Some angel-hand has touch'd my heart;
And, heal'd of all its vain unrest,
It seems like one who prays apart.

Thou, at whose word the Spring with balm
Shall melt the ice and mist away,
Speak Thou, and let this New Year's calm
Be bid to deepen and to stay.

Pass out, red sunshine, from the skies!
Old things shall pass away like thee;
Before thy breath, my God, arise
A new heaven and new earth to me!

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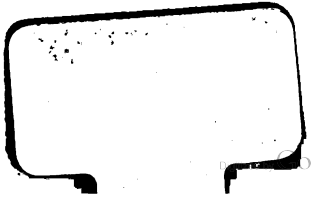

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